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COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS

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Working Group on Indigenous Populations
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Item 11 of the provisional agenda

INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Preparations for the mid-point review of the Decade

Note by the Secretariat

1. By its resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, the General Assembly proclaimed the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004). The goal of the Decade is to strengthen international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, education and health. The theme of the Decade is "Indigenous people: partnership in action".

2. By its resolution 50/157 of 21 December 1995, the General Assembly adopted the Programme of Activities for the Decade and decided to include in its agenda an item entitled "Programme of activities of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People".

3. In the Programme of Activities, the General Assembly identified a number of objectives for the Decade, inter alia, the adoption of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples; the implementation of the recommendations pertaining to indigenous people of all high-level international conferences; continued consideration of the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people within the United Nations system; the education of indigenous and non-indigenous

societies concerning the situation, cultures, languages, rights and aspirations of indigenous people; and that the United Nations system, as well as communities and private enterprises, should devote special attention to development activities of benefit to indigenous communities.

4. The Programme of Activities contains a list of recommendations to the major actors, such as the United Nations system, regional organizations, Member States, indigenous organizations, and private entities with regard to desirable action and activities on their part in the course of the Decade.

5. Furthermore, the aforementioned resolution of the General Assembly states that the objectives of the Decade should be assessed by quantifiable outcomes that measure improvements in the lives of indigenous people and that can be evaluated halfway through the Decade and at its end. In resolution 50/157, the General Assembly decided that the Programme of Activities for the Decade may be reviewed and updated throughout the Decade and that at the mid-point of the Decade (1999) the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly should review the results of the activities to identify obstacles to the achievement of the goals of the Decade and to recommend solutions for overcoming those obstacles. In its resolution 52/108 of 12 December 1997, the General Assembly noted the need for a mid-point review of the implementation of the programme of activities.

6. At its fifteenth session, the Working Group on Indigenous Populations recalled the recommendation of the General Assembly that there be a review of the Decade in 1999 and decided to include a sub-item entitled "Preparations for the mid-point review of the Decade" on the agenda of its sixteenth session.